

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: By Thomas F. Keating, on April 18, 1989, at 11:00 a.m., Room 405 of the State Capitol

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Senators Tom Keating, Larry Tveit, Fred Van Valkenburg, Loren Jenkins, Darryl Meyer, Lawrence Stimatz, Pete Story, Bill Yellowtail, Elmer Severson, Cecil Weeding, Dorothy Eck, Jerry Noble.

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Bob Thompson and Helen McDonald

EXECUTIVE ACTION

SJR 24

Senator Paul Rapp-Svrcek, District #26, introduced this SJR 24 and stated that the State of Idaho recently passed a law aimed at the curtailing of raw log exports to Japan but it seems the way the law is written it would also curtail raw log exports to other states. He said that his area gets a lot of its raw logs from Idaho. He wasn't sure this resolution would help but it certainly wouldn't hurt.

Don Allen said the wood products industry over the last two or three months strongly opposed exporting of logs from this country. His industry disagreed with the president's attempts to remove bans and supported Senator Packwood's bill introduced in Congress to make the ban permanent. Montana has problems getting enough logs to keep its own mills running. One mill in Dillon is shutting down and one in Livingston has shut down. Mr. Allen said that Keith Olsen, Montana Logging Association, also supports this resolution.

Senator Jenkins asked if the controversy about Canadian logs coming to the country was settled.

Mr. Allen said after efforts made with the task force, groups of industry groups, Montana's Congressional delegation, and the administration, the industry was successful in getting a 15% export fee put on logs brought

to Canada.

Senator Jenkins said in 1959 in California, the Japanese were buying logs, taking them out into international waters where a mill was set up on a ship, and bringing a finished product back into this county. Are they still doing that?

Mr. Allen said he wasn't sure but he didn't think so because of the environmental problems that were created. There were quite a few meetings some years ago between members of the governments of some states and the Japanese over that problem.

Senator Story asked if what Idaho is doing is unconstitutional?

Mr. Allen said if somebody challenged they probably would have a legitimate complaint. But the logging industry does not get that many logs from state lands.

Senator Story asked Senator Severson since there are two sawmills and 20 log home places in his area, if they get a lot of logs from Idaho?

Senator Severson said the log home plants get the biggest share of logs for the homes from Idaho. Montana has logs but they are in wilderness.

Senator Keating asked why logs are imported from Idaho rather than using Montana logs?

Senator Severson answered because the plants can get them from Idaho and can't get them from Montana. There are millions of lodgepole in the Bitterroot but they are in the wilderness.

Senator Severson said this resolution refers to United States exports which would have much effect nationally and what Montana should do is try to correct the commerce between the two states.

Senator Rapp-Svrcek said he tried to draft the resolution so that it would make a positive statement regarding export of raw logs from the United States to foreign countries. In that sense, the reduction also supports what Idaho is trying to do. Senator Rapp-Svrcek said he wanted to make the Idaho government aware of how its actions might adversely affect Montana's timber supply.

Senator Keating asked how much state-owned forest is there in Idaho?

Senator Rapp-Svrcek wasn't certain but he thinks the state forests in Idaho are considerably larger than Montana's. But overall Montana has more state-owned land but less with trees on it.

Senator Keating noted there was a Montana state-land forest sale scheduled in the Swan Lake area and that was challenged under the Montana Environmental Policy Act and the flow of logs to a mill in that area was jeopardized. Is that still going on?

Mr. Allen said that suit was brought and the various parties are involved in a court fight. It is a new ball game for the state foresters because they have not had those sales challenged before.

Senator Keating asked to what extent do these challenges have on forest service contracts and state land contracts for the harvesting of timber? To what extent does that restrict the flow of raw logs to the mills in Montana.

Mr. Allen said that is a big part of the problem regarding the timber supply right now because of the challenges on both state forest lands and the Northern Pacific timber sales.

Senator Keating said it seemed to him there is something wrong with Montana's regulatory system or with Montana laws in that Montana can't harvest its own timber to keep the state's mills running when our economy is at such a low ebb.

Mr. Allen said the problem is very serious and there are efforts being made to resolve it. Mr. Allen's concern is that the problem will not be resolved in time to save some of Montana's existing mills.

Senator Rapp-Svrcek closed by saying he hoped the committee would support this resolution.

Senator Jenkins moved SJR 24 be concurred in. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 11:30 a.m.


THOMAS F. KEATING, CHAIRMAN

ROLL CALL

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

505th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1989

Date 4-18-89

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Chairman Tom Keating	✓		
Vice-Chairman Larry Tveit	✓		
Senator Fred VanValkenburg	✓		
Senator Loren Jenkins	✓		
Senator Darryl Meyer	✓		
Senator Lawrence Stimatz	✓		
Senator Pete Story	✓		
Senator Bill Yellowtail	✓		
Senator Elmer Severson	✓		
Senator Cecil Weeding	✓		
Senator Dorothy Eck	✓		
Senator Jerry Noble	✓		

Each day attach to minutes.

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

April 18, 1989

MR. PRESIDENT:

We, your committee on Natural Resources, having had under consideration SJR 24 (first reading copy -- white), respectfully report that SJR 24 do pass.

DO PASS

Signed: *Thomas F. Keating*
Thomas F. Keating, Chairman

4/18/89
1:50 pm